

*Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009*

**Remarks Following a Meeting With United States Special Envoy to Sudan  
Major General J. Scott Gration**

*March 30, 2009*

*The President.* Hello, everybody. Obviously on a busy news day, I wanted us to make sure that we weren't losing sight of something that has been an ongoing international crisis, and that is the situation in Darfur.

As many of you know, there has been a longstanding humanitarian crisis there, prompted by displacement and genocide that has been taking place. There have been a series of negotiations around resolving this crisis in Sudan. It has not gotten resolved, and it is now worsening.

And so I wanted to publicly affirm the importance of General Scott Gration, who has been appointed as Special Envoy to Sudan, to work on a whole host of issues that I think are of importance to the international community and should touch the conscience of all of us.

General Gration is one of my top national security advisers. He's somebody who I've known for a long time. We've traveled together in Africa. He was a close associate during the campaign. And so I can't think of somebody who is better equipped to travel to Africa, the continent where he grew up, and communicate to Sudan a couple of important points. Number one, we have an immediate crisis prompted by the Khartoum Government's expulsion of nongovernmental organizations that are providing aid to displaced persons inside of Sudan. And we have to figure out a mechanism to get those NGOs back in place, to reverse that decision, or to find some mechanism whereby we avert a enormous humanitarian crisis.

Even as we're dealing with that immediate issue, we can't take our eyes off the longstanding conflicts in Sudan that have resulted in all these persons being displaced. And that means that General Gration's task is going to be to see if we can reinvigorate the north-south agreement, make sure that it is implemented in an effective way, and that we are also exploring a mechanism whereby we can get talks between rebels and the Khartoum Government that could help, once and for all, resolve the Darfur situation.

This is going to be a very difficult task; it will be a time-consuming task. We don't expect any solutions overnight to the longstanding problems there. Fortunately, what's happened in Darfur has touched so many people around the world, and we have seen such an extraordinary mobilization of advocates, many of who are sitting at this table—we've got bipartisan interest on the part of Members of Congress around this issue—that I actually think that America can speak effectively with one voice and bring the moral and other elements of our stature to bear in trying to deal with this situation.

And I can't think of a person who's better than Scott Gration to represent us in this critical task, and I am sending him off with my full confidence. He will be speaking for the administration, and he will be coming back to report to me very shortly about what he's found there and additional steps that we can take to deal with this situation.

So, thank you, Scott, for the great work.

*Maj. Gen. Gration.* Thank you, sir.

*The President.* Good. All right, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:24 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Sudan :: Special Envoy to Sudan Major General J. Scott Gration, meeting.

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